Indexing

General Instructions

1. The best method of indexing is to read your page proofs carefully to compile a list of likely entries, and then reduce and refine the index on a second pass through the text.
2. An indexing program is not likely to yield a useful or usable index.
3. A proper-noun index lists only names, titles, and other terms capitalized in the book. It is appropriate for some books but not most. Check with your editor before deciding to compile a proper-noun index.
4. A general index includes both proper nouns and other broad topics and concepts that are central to understanding your argument.
5. A general index should include only those subjects that a reader is likely to look up; the pages listed should contain substantive information, not just passing mentions.
6. As a rule of thumb, the length of the index should work out to one double-spaced manuscript page for each 15–20 pages of the printed book. So a 300-page book would have an index of about 15 manuscript pages.
7. Prepare the index one column to a page, double-spaced, in Microsoft Word, formatted as regular text ("Normal").
8. Send the file to your editor as an email attachment.
9. Consult *The Chicago Manual of Style* (available online) for other details not covered in this memo.

Details

1. Use the search function in your PDF page proofs to refine your index.
2. A headnote telling readers what you did not index is unnecessary.
3. Do not create an index entry for the main subject of the book (biographies might be an exception; check with your editor).
4. Frontmatter, preface, captions, and notes should not be indexed.

5. Do not include birth and death dates, definitions of terms, or other parenthetical information unless it is necessary to disambiguate the entry.

   Delaware (river)
   Delaware (state)

6. Create subentries when the number of pages listed exceeds six or so. Order subentries according to the first page number listed or alphabetical order, and separate subentries with a semicolon. Do not put subentries on separate lines. Do not create two levels of subentries (that is, sub-subentries).

   Bazarov, V.A., 60–75, 78, 117, 122; on market mechanisms, 58, 73–74; on social overheads, 69–71, 158, 182

7. Make sure the wording of each subentry refers back to the main entry, not to a preceding entry.

   Soviet Union: pact with Estonia, 103–104; pact with Latvia and Lithuania, 104

8. Use a comma to separate the name of each entry from its first page number, and use a colon between an entry and a subentry when there is no intervening page number.

   Social overheads, 138, 157
   Soviet Union: pact with Estonia, 103–104; pact with Latvia and Lithuania, 104

9. Use no final punctuation for entries, except when followed by a cross-reference. Arrange cross-references in alphabetical order.

   Social overheads, 138, 157. *See also* Bazarov, V.A.; Railroads
   National Socialists. *See* Nazis

10. Give page numbers in full: 198–199 (not 198–99, not 198–9).

11. Alphabetize entries letter-by-letter up to the first comma or colon (ignoring spaces, hyphens, periods, and apostrophes).

    Index, price
    Index numbers
    Indiana
    Indian Ocean
    Industrialization
    Industrial Revolution

12. Alphabetize all names exactly as they are spelled, including those beginning with Mc and Mac. Alphabetize St. after Ss, before Su.

13. Alphabetize numbers as if they are spelled out: "T4 cells" as "Tfour cells."

14. As a last step before emailing the index, double-check the numerical (or alphabetical) order of all subentries and the alphabetical order of all main entries.